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ABSTRACT

Designed specifically for graduate assistants teaching composition at Michigan State University (MSU), this handbook provides a general information base for teaching assistants, offering practical advice and discussing various aspects of course design, classroom practice, and the logistics of teaching at a large public university. A section on course descriptions presents brief summaries of the non-fiction courses which are offered by the MSU English Department and taught by graduate assistants, and includes course title, number, format, and content. Sections on computer writing, preparing a syllabus, writing assignments, class discussions and peer editing, and reading and responding to student writing are included; and a special note on mechanics gives advice on editing for grammatical errors. Other topics covered in the handbook include attendance policy, student-teacher conferences, and running a class on a day to day basis. The sections on grading discuss portfolio grading as well as the MSU grading system, incomplete policies, and grade disputes or changes. The final sections review the MSU Code of Teaching Responsibility and the Student Instructional Rating System. A bibliography of books on teaching writing and composition theory is also provided. (MM)

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TEACHING COMPOSITION:

A HANDBOOK FOR GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

Craig A. Bernthal
Jay B. Ludwig

CS211104

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PREFACE

The information, ideas, and suggestions offered in this manual are a kind of bare minimum, a place for a graduate assistant teaching composition in our department to start when he or she has questions about course design, classroom practice, or the logistics of being a teacher in a large public university. In choosing what to write about we consulted our colleagues in the writing staff, our own experience as teachers, and the sense of what new teachers might need that has developed from several years of orientation workshops for new teachers of composition. We are eager to try the handbook out, to see the suggestions our colleagues will have about what else needs to be discussed, what needs to be discussed more (or less) exhaustively, and what needs to be changed. Let us have your comments.

CAB/JBL
June 15, 1986

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COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Though most of you will be starting your teaching career at Michigan State with English 213, the basic expository writing course, there is often an opportunity, after you've had some experience, to teach higher level writing courses (and also basic courses in creative writing and literature). To give you a preview of the possibilities for teaching writing at MSU, what follows is a description of the non-fiction writing courses offfered by the MSU English Department. Except for the 400-level courses, all of these courses have been taught by graduate students:

PREREQUISITES FOR STUDENTS

Students taking 300 level writing courses should have English 213 or its equivalent or the approval of the instructor before being allowed to enroll. Should you find that you have a student in your 300 level-class who has not met these requirements, it is within your discretion to demand that the student drop the course.

ENG 101 AND 102 Responses Through Writing (9 Credits)

Format. A two-term, nine-credit course taught in a Fall-Winter sequence. Students enroll in the same section and continue with the same instructor both terms. Grades for 101 are deferred until the end of 102. Typically meets four times a week both terms. Honors sections enroll students from all degree programs; regular sections enroll only students within the college of Arts and Letters. For both groups 101/102 is an option to ATL and satisfies the MSU general education requirement in communication.

Course Content. Beginning with short, informal kinds of writing, students in 101/102 come to acquire experience with a wide range of writing tasks by the

end of the second term. Since the course works from the assumption that, in a sense, all writing is personal, students typically spend most of their first term writing about subjects which come from their personal experience. In the second term the personal style students have experimented with in their earlier work is directed toward writing tasks common to non-fiction writing. Students thus develop a strong sense of the personal base of language and of the ways in which that personal element of language must accommodate itself to the public communication of ideas, information, and experience. Throughout the course students serve as audience and editor for each other. Their work--both early and final drafts--is closely scrutinized by their fellow students as well as by their instructor. Students thus gain expertise as writers by practicing authentic writing tasks: They write for a real audience, they revise their work through several stages, and they gain experience editing their own work and the work of others. Such attention to the processes of writing is facilitated by the fact that students and instructor work together for two consecutive terms. Instructors in 101/102 bcome very familiar with their students' strengths and weaknesses as writers, and they work with their students individually throughout the two terms.

ENG 104, 105 AND 106

Format. English 104-5-6 is a freshman writing sequence which satisfies the University's general education requirement in communication for students in the College of Natural Science and the Honors College. The three terms form an integrated course. Each course in the sequence is worth 3 credits. Students who enroll in English 104 must continue in the sequence until they complete their University writing requirement; they many not switch out of the sequence after one or two terms, though they may change sections. Enrollment is limited to 24 students per section.

English 104 Writing for Science Majors

Students in English 104 acquire experience with a wide range of writing tasks. The writing assignments include a detailed description, a personal essay, an argument, and a scientific autobiography. Emphasis at this point in the sequence is on increasing general writing ability, rather than simply focusing on scientific writing. Students critique each other's writing in small editing groups and work on individual writing problems through careful revision of their work.

English 104 also aims to develop the students' editing and analytical ability--to teach them to see what works in their own prose, what does not work, and why. Other coursework consists of class analysis and discussion of one's own and other's writing, and reading and discussions about various kinds of writing by scientists.

English 105 The Scientist as Writer

English 105 continues to give the student experience with a wide range of writing tasks. The workshop elements of 104--rough drafts, critiques of each other's writing, and revisions--continue to play a role in the second term. In English 105, however, students spend more time reading and analyzing the writing of professional scientists than they did in 104. Students read technical and popular scientific articles, personal essays by scientists, history of science, scientists' autobiographies, and science fiction. The writing assignments are modelled to some extent on the readings.

English 106 Introductory Scientific Writing.

English 106 emphasizes science writing. Students read and write many kinds of scientific prose directed toward professional and popular audiences. Assignments include the writing of technical papers, descriptions of procedures and research, and explanations of scientific principles and discoveries. Also, the students may do some non-scientific writing. Discussion and workshop sessions continue in the third term of the sequence.

English 230 Non-Fiction Imaginative Prose Writing

Format: This is a four credit, sophomore level writing course and it is usually taught fall, winter and spring terms.

Content: English 230 is designed to help students develop their ability to write personal essays, and other kinds of autobiographical or personal prose. The course encourages students to experiment with their writing and to exercise their creativity. Like other English Department writing courses, 230 is run as a workshop. Students spend a substantial amount of class time discussing each

other's writing. Writing assignments seek to help students develop their ability to produce writing of some literary merit and to help them accommodate pertinent techniques of fiction and poetry to the uses of non-fiction. Instructors frequently use collections of appropriate non-fiction writing, such as excerpts from autobiographies or collections of essays.

ENG 310 Writing for Pre-Law Students

Format: ENG 310 is a four credit junior-senior level writing course. It is usually offered fall, winter and spring terms.

Course Content: This course provides a step-by-step process for organizing and writing a legal argument. Students work to develop a clear, logical and persuasive style. The course covers topics such as the strategy of legal persuasion, techniques of legal writing, logic, and argument. Assignments prepare students for the kind of work they will be doing in law school and as attorneys. Many of the assignments involve case studies and hypothetical legal problems in which the student applies a rule of law to a given factual situation and then draws conclusions as to the rights and liabilites arising from that situation. Many of the exercises prepare students directly for the Law School Admissions Test.

ENGLISH 312 Advanced Workshop in Expository Writing

Format: This four credit class is for upper-level students from all majors. Most students who take the course have had one or more writing courses in addition to freshman composition. The course is usually taught fall, winter and spring terms.

Content: In ENG 312 students work on professional and institutional writing of the sort they are likely to be doing in corporate, governmental or academic settings. Instructors in the course have often emphasized three basic forms: the summary, the report, and the position paper. Besides being practical, these forms exercise students in the basic intellectual and compositional skills of finding the relevant facts in a large body of information, organizing and analyzing those facts, and drawing conclusions based on facts. Instructors have

also tried to make the writing assignments reflect their students' particular career interests, for instance, by centering all or some of the writing assignments on topics related to the each student's career goal or major.

ENG 313 Scientific Writing

Format: This four credit class is for upper-level science students. Scientific writing is frequently taught winter and spring terms.

Content: The course addresses the need for clear, unambiguous writing in science aims to develop the student's skill in writing about scientific subjects. Students analyze a range of professional scientific writing, focusing on the interrelationship between an author's style, audience, and subject matter. Assignments require the student to write for both popular and professional audiences. Thus, the course is not simply aimed at teaching students to write for professional journals and reports, but also to write the type of article or essay which might appear in a newspaper or magazine of general circulation. ENG 313 is frequently run as a workshop in which students edit and critique each other's papers.

ENG 423 Writing Style and Technique

Format: This four credit course is for upper division students from all majors.

Content: Eng 423 provides intensive training in writing and editing with special emphasis on specific techniques for improving expository writing. Students are generally required to hand in, at the beginning of the term, about 20 pages of exposition (typed and double spaced) that they have already written for other courses. This material may consist of one paper or several papers. Students analyze the writing sample during selected class periods. During the term students write about 5,000 words of original work. Classes often are conducted as seminars, with students regularly criticizing each other's (and professionals') work.

ENG 424 Conference Course in Advanced Writing

Format: This variable credit course is for upper-level students and is almost always conducted as a tutorial.

Content: This course provides the student with an opportunity to pursue advanced projects in writing. Such projects might include: the completion of a substantial manuscript, intensive work on a particular kind of writing, revision and final editing of manuscripts previously drafted.

COMPUTER WRITING SECTIONS AND COMPUTER LAB

Students in several sections of English 213, and other English Department writing courses use Macintosh computers to prepare their assignments. The computers are located in the College of Arts and Letters Writing Lab, B-100 Wells Hall and in Brody Hall. In the lab students use a word processing program (MacWrite) and an editing program (MacProof). The editing program can be used to highlight misspellings, racist and sexist language, and excessive use of nominalization or "to be" verbs.

PREPARING A SYLLABUS

On the first day you walk into your new class, you will need to distribute a syllabus. The syllabus is simply an outline of the course that you are going to teach. Like an itinerary, it tells your students where you are taking them. Also, writing a syllabus serves an educational function for you. It forces you to get organized and conceptualize your course before you begin it.

A syllabus also has some of the characteristics of a contract. In effect, it is an agreement between you and your students about: (1) the purpose of the course, (2) its content, (3) how grades will be determined, (4) how absences will affect grades, (4) the kinds of papers which will be assigned, (5) when assignments will be made and when they are due, (6) your policy toward late papers, (7) and other miscellaneous details, such as the when and where of your office hours, and whether and when your students can all you at home.

The syllabus is, however, more than a statement of classroom policies and objectives. It is your first written communication to your students. It forms the basis of your first class discussions. A well written, clear, cogent, and even

exciting syllabus is your first opportunity to demonstrate the energy, competence and dedication you will bring to the course.

If you have some anxiety about teaching (a very natural phenomenon), you will be surprised to find out how effectively a well prepared syllabus dampens the butterflys.

TEXTS, HANDOUTS AND COURSEPACKS

Just as there is no specifically required syllabus for any of the writing classes in the English Department, there are no required texts. Indeed, there is no requirement that a text be used at all, and most of the people teaching ENG 213, for example, never use one. However, there is nothing to stop you from using a text, if it suits your approach. If you decide to use a textbook, let the course coordinator know as soon as you can before the start of the term.

If you do not use a textbook, you will probably be distributing information to your classes in the form of "handouts." **AEGS** (Associated English Graduate Students) maintains a community handout file in which graduate students deposit many of their best materials. Feel free to consult the file. Your fellow graduate students are a mine of information on handouts and are generally very happy to share whatever they have done. However, you will probably want to use other people's work only as a guide. Once you get to know your particular class, and your own teaching style, you'll want to develop more personal materials. The Department has mimeograph, ditto, thermofax and photocopier machines to set you into production. Use of the first three machines is free and paper is provided; the photocopy machine costs 3 cents a copy. Since the Department discourages extensive use of paper, you may want to prepare a **course pack** for your students. A course pack is simply a collection of photocopied materials, designed by you and sold by a copy service. Designing and producing a course pack allows you to distribute most or even all of your handouts at the beginning of the term, and that can save you a lot of time.

There are three photocopy establishments within easy walking of MSU. All of them will copy course materials for your class, put the material into a course pack (you can even get spiral binding) and then sell it to your students. Using this approach, you can really create your own textbook. You are only limited by your own creativity and a reasonable regard for your students' pocketbooks. Few TAs use course packs during their first year of teaching, since they are still developing their ideas and materials. However, once you are confident of your

course-design, using a course pack can be the most economical and organized method of distributing handouts.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

In keeping with the goals of English 213, you should try to devise assignments that (1) develop general writing ability and/or (2) help students to write better in academic and professional settings. Traditionally (or at least since the nineteenth century), writing instructors have recognized a taxonomy composed of four "modes" of expository writing: narrative, descriptive, argumentative, and definitional. Probably any piece of student writing will operate in several "modes," though one may predominate. For instance, a narrative of an important event in a student's life might have passages describing people and places; it might argue that certain conduct was morally correct or incorrect, and it might even define certain things or ideas which play an important part in the narrative (e.g., "As the giant bore down on me I grabbed my widget. A widget is . . ."). You may find it useful to think about the modes when constructing assignments, but don't feel bound to make an assignment correspond to a single mode. Your aim is to give enjoyable and challenging assignments that promote the goals of the course.

Here are some examples of common Eng 213 writing assignments: narratives of personal experiences; character sketches; resumes and cover letters; business letters; movie, book, record, restaurant, or video reviews; arguments in favor or against virtually anything; papers on "how to do" something; rhetorical analyses of the news; letters to editors; editorials, descriptions of a particular location or institution.

You may also want to give some assignments that force your students to use their imaginations in unfamiliar ways. Such exercises, often done in class, can generate interesting writing and discussion. In this vein, TAs have given students assignments such as the following: Write your own obituary; imagine the date is 2046. You are from Mars and you have just landed on the MSU campus. what do you see? You have received a letter from your great-granddaughter via a time machine, through which only letters can travel; write a response to that letter. Your pet dog is mysteriously growing bigger and bigger each day, and is getting strangely menacing; write about this experience in the form of a journal. Obviously, in creating this kind of assignment, you are only limited by your imagination.

The quality of your students' writing will depend not only on their abilities but on the quality of assignments which you give and the way in which you give them. Your tendency in the beginning may be to devote too little time to this task. Don't be parsimonious in allowing time to explain assignments and dispel confusion. . Give your students plenty of opportunity to ask questions. It is often helpful to students to have whole class discussions about the assignment. This gives them an opportunity to generate and get responses to ideas, and to vent their anxieties. To get your students started, you can also give them in-class prewriting exercises. For example, students can make lists of possible topics, or "freewrite" about their topic. [Freewriting is simply writing as fast as you can, sometimes with a particular topic in mind, as a means of discovering ideas connected with the topic. You might think of it as written free association. Ken Macrorie has very good discussions of freewriting and other pre-writing activities (see **SHORT BIBLIOGRAPHY**).] Thus, giving the assignment blends into the writing process itself. Helping your students begin well makes it much more likely they will write well.

CLASS DISCUSSIONS AND PEER EDITING

One of the purposes of a writing workshop is to give each student the opportunity to get feedback, not only from the teacher, but from other students. Whole class discussions of student papers give the author a rare opportunity to find out how 24 other people feel about his or her writing. Most students, albeit a bit nervous, enjoy such sessions and are eager to get constructive criticism.

An effective way to organize a whole class discussion is to ask two students to make copies of their paper for the whole class. (Each discussion usually takes about a twenty to thirty minutes.) The copies can then be distributed a day or two before the discussion is to take place. The members of the class will take the papers home and read them, returning to class with a few notes about how the paper affected them and what they felt were the strengths and weaknesses of each paper. (The discussion of peer editing in the second half of this section will give you an idea of the kinds of comments you want to elicit from your students.)

Once your class has read the papers, of course, you can go on to the discussion itself. Ideally, you fire the starting gun and a veritable storm of insight breaks loose, which, of course, you gently guide. After all, that's what teachers are for, right? Unfortunately, class discussions seldom proceed with

such spontaneity:

"O.K., does anyone have anything to tell John about his paper?" you ask. The silence is only comparable to that found in a Benedictine monastery at three in the morning. John waits expectantly and he may wait until next term unless you do something to elicit a response. What can you do?

The art of stimulating a class discussion is not reducible to a few simple rules. But there are a few general strategies for initiating and sustaining a profitable discussion:

1) At the beginning of the course, with reminders as needed, tell your class why you think class discussions are helpful and what you expect them to contribute. You can emphasize to your students that they are participants in a workshop, a community of people who, to a large extent, are teaching each other how to write. By offering thoughtful, caring, sensitive feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of each other's writing, they are helping each other. John cannot know whether he has successfully communicated unless he gets this feedback.

2) Ask the class questions. For instance, you can begin simply by asking general questions, such as "How did reading this paper make you feel?" or "What were some of the things that you liked about this paper?" Someone will probably have mercy on Charlie and admit to liking at least something about the paper, and once the beginning inertia is overcome, a very good discussion may follow. As your class gets more involved with the paper, you can direct the discussion to important issues by asking more specific questions.

3) If, after asking a question to the class in general, you still get no response, ask that question of a specific person. Simply start calling on people. After the first couple days of class, you will have a very good idea of who likes to talk and who does not. You might want to call on one of your "talkers" to get the discussion going, but in order to get your shy students involved, you may have to "haul" them into the discussion. You do not want your class to degenerate into a dialogue between yourself and half a dozen other students. You need to keep working toward whole class discussions.

4) Rather than conducting a question and answer session between yourself and the class, encourage a dialogue among the members of the class, with yourself as mediator. Especially when someone's paper is being discussed, comments, pro and con, should be addressed to the author of the paper, and the author should have ample opportunity to respond. Your goal is a real dialogue between the author and his fellow writers. Of course, you do not want the author to wind up arguing with the other class members. The objective of peer critiques is to develop constructive, not destructive feedback.

5) You have the primary responsibility of moving the discussion from topic to topic. Sometimes you can elicit, unwittingly, a raging, and rather pointless or irrelevant discussion between certain members of the class. (Example: you are discussing a paper about whether the university should allow new sororities. The discussion turns into a debate between the three or four sorority/fraternity members in the class, on the merits of the issue. The paper itself is no longer under discussion. The other 20 members of the class are bored stiff.) When the discussion goes awry, you have to do something about it. Break in and move to something else. You are in charge. Also, if you have planned to discuss two or three papers during the class period, you have to make sure that time gets budgeted for each paper. Explain such time constraints at the beginning of the class and enforce them. If you have a great discussion going on one paper, and you suspect that the next paper will not be as productive, you may want to extend the discussion of the first at the expense of the second, but be aware of what you are doing and try to give each student's paper fair consideration.

Peer Editing

It would be nice to have a whole class discussion of everyone's paper for every assignment, but obviously, there isn't enough class time. This is where "peer editing" comes in. Peer editing groups are usually composed of two to four students who read and edit each other's papers. About midway between the day you give an assignment and the day on which a draft must be submitted for grading or comments, the class can have a peer editing session in which the members of each group respond to each other's papers. One way of organizing such sessions is to have each student make a photocopy of his or her draft for each member of the editing group. Then editors can make comments directly on the papers.

The following is a copy of an excellent handout explaining "peer editing," prepared by TA Carol Hale She created it for one of her classes, but other TAs use it regularly. Indeed, it is an example of how a very useful and well written handout can be elevated to the status of "community property":

Peer Editing

An important part of the writing workshop is something known as 'peer editing.' This phenomenon involves groups of three or four students (or sometimes

pairs) who work together throughout the term, reading and commenting on each other's writing. the purpose of per editing is two-fold. First, it provides each writer with an audience in addition to the instructor; an audience who must strive to give helpful, thoughful feedback on each piece of writing. It is necessary for writers--especially students writer--to realize that the nature of evaluating writing is essentially subjective. By receiving a variety of responses to the same piece of writing, students will observe the effect their writing has on an audience. They will also learn to accept and evaluate the comments they receive. Second, peer editing serves to sharpen each student's critical abilities, which will ultimately help him/her as a writer. Every writer must also edit his/her own work as a paper is developed. Peer editing, then, is beneficial to both writer and critic.

Because peer editing helps to develop a critical eye, it will on some levels serve you better than instructor feedback. Obviously, the more caare you take with your editing, the better you will become at it. This will make you more independent than if you simply relied on the instructor to evaluate your writing. In taking this active role, you learn far more about writing. When you finish 213, you will be able to write and evaluate your writing: you will be able to edit and revise your writing. But you must take your responsibilities seriously or you will leave 213 without these benefits.

We work with a limited amount of time in this course, so it is vital that each group use its time effectively. You will have approximately 40 minutes for each editing session, so plan to divide the time fairly with equal time being given to each paper. Obviously when you are working in pairs that will be easier to do. You will find it helpful, I think, to read each paper twice. The first reading should be a quick one to pick up the content and direction of the writing. On the second reading, mark anything which stands out to you. Look for strengths, weaknesses, organization and flow of ideas. Grammar is not the issue here. By and large you may leave that particular headache to me.

Students often respond with apprehension to peer editing, fearing that they are too ignorant of writing to make valid comments. Sharing your writing is a vulnerable experience, so it is understandable that you would feel

insecure, especially at first. If you make a sincere effort, I believe you will find your confidence--growing. Remember that writers produce their work for readers. You are all literate college students; you are all capable of responding to a piece of writing. Forget the technical stuff. Relax, and concentrate on the message of the writing.

Nuts and Bolts

As you begin the process of editing someone else's paper, you may find it helpful to consider the following types of questions: can you follow the logic of the piece all the way through? Are there places where you have to stop and re-read in order to catch the sense of what is being said? Why? How could it be written to communicate more clearly? Does the writing hold your interest? If so, praise the writer and point out exaactly what he did that got and held your attention. (Don't forget to notice techniques you might want to incorporate in your own writing. Writers learn to write by writing--and by reading other writers.) Are you bored by the piece. Again, why? Point out specifically what you think is dull and make suggestions for livening things up.

I would like everyone to use the following points as guidelines for response:

1. When I finished reading X's paper I felt _____. (Fill in the blank with an appropriate adjective. Be honest, and try to use one word--'excited' 'bored' 'angry' whatever it is you feel as you finish reading!)

2. The main point of this paper seems to be _____. (The reasoning behind this response is that writers often get off the track, just as speakers do. Does the paper make the point is sets out to accomplish?)

3. An outstanding strength of this paper is _____.

4. An outstanding weakness of this paper is _____.

In answering 3 and 4 substantiate your comments with examples from the paper. Don't make open-ended

> comments like 'the paper seemed vague.' So is that comment, which makes it virtually useless to the writer. Point out specific areas--'on page three the second paragraph' so that the writer knows exactly where he/she needs to work. Whenever it seems helpful, try suggesting possible alternatives to single words, or to whole sentences. Look at the organization of the paper--does everything seem to be in the most logical position? Or would that fifth paragraph fit better in the third paragraph slot? Obviously, peer editing will require a very close reading.
>
> A final word. At the end of 213, the biggest complaint I receive is something like this--'the people in my group were not tough enough. I turned in lousy paper and all they said was 'nice paper, I like it!' If each member of your group takes peer editing seriously, these sessions will be a valuable aid to your progress as a writer. They will otherwise be a waste of time.

Carol obviously had a very specific conception of how peer editing was to fit into her class. However, her statement of the goals of peer editing are more or less universal. You may have different ideas of just how you implement peer editing, if you use it at all. For instance, some TAs wind up changing the membership of peer editing groups, so that students get a larger range of responses. (The counter-argument is that it takes several weeks for the members of a peer editing group to become comfortable with one another, and begin to give really good feedback. You may simply want to get your class's opinion.) If the class in general is having particular problems, you may want to request peer editors to look out for those problems. You may want to distribute different editing instruction for each session. You will probably want to monitor editing groups and even sit in on them. Again, you can adjust the use of peer-editing to your own teaching style.

READING AND RESPONDING TO STUDENT WRITING

Its Saturday morning and you have your first set of 24 student papers, each about three to five pages long, sitting on your desk. You have decided to get these papers back to your students on Monday, come what may. Having fortified yourself with an extra glass of orange juice, you start reading.

What follows is a step by step method for approaching this task:

(1) Read the first paper through from beginning to end, purely for content. Put you pencil down on the desk and don't make a mark. You will see spelling errors, subjects that don't agree with verbs, and other easily spottable mechanical mistakes. But you don't want to be picky at this stage. You are giving the student a chance to communicate to you.

(2) Read the paper once again, bringing your analytical skills to bear. At this point you are looking for global strengths and weaknesses. Is there something wrong with the paper structurally? Does it make sense? Does the student leave out information the reader cannot be expected to know? Is the paper boring? Is the thought or language striking or original? Does the author seem to care about his subject? Now write your major comments about the paper, setting forth two or three strengths and two or three weaknesses with some explanation of each. Commenting on strengths is as important as commenting on weaknesses. Never return a paper that exclusively focuses on problems.

(3) Go over the paper one more time, noting problems at the sentence and paragraph level. Are there sentences that don't make sense? If so, what seems to be the problem? This is the point at which you can make some marks having to do with mechanical mistakes, such as lack of agreement between subject and verb, or spelling errors. If the student is having pervasive trouble with some point of mechanics, you may want to add this to your list of "major" comments.

When you make your comments on the paper, follow two rules of thumb:

(1) Do not attempt to deal with all the problems of the paper at one time. It is best not to try to solve all the student's problems at once. Calling the student's attention to every mistake or weakness may result in so much overload that communication fails. Realistically, a student will absorb about three or four comments per paper. If you try to make more comments than that, the student may absorb less.

(2) Emphasize the major communication problems rather than the minor ones. For example, failure to state arguments or facts in a logical order will probably impair communication more than misspellings. Therefore, your first priority should be to evaluate the paper globally.

Simply repeat this step by step process of reading and responding until you get to the bottom of the stack. Then, you may want to quickly review what you have done, to see if additional comments come to mind. At this point, unless you are using the portfolio method of grading (see **GRADING: THE PORTFOLIO IDEA**), you can grade the papers. Having gone through the evaluation procedure, you will

have a very good idea which papers are good and which are not. Divide the papers into four stacks, representing 4,3,2 and 1 point grades. You can then you wish, make further divisions in the grading.

Having gone through all of this, you may still be faced with a couple papers which are simply baffling. You know that something is wrong with these papers, but you cannot articulate what. With these papers you have three valid courses of action:

(1) Tackle the problem once more yourself. You have done a lot of reading during your life or you would not be here. That means that you have an intuitive sense of what works and what does not work in writing. When you have a feeling of dis-ease about a paper, pay attention to that feeling and try to articulate it. Most of the time, you will be able to put your finger on the problem. Your most important comments are your feelings about the paper as a whole.

(2) You can try to describe your bafflement to the author and work on the problem together. Your confusion itself is good feedback. Maybe between the two of you, you will be able to discover the problem.

(3) You can get another opinion: doctors ask other doctors for consultations, so why can't you have a consultation with another TA or a faculty member? The answer is that you can and should, particularly if you and the student have not been able to make headway on the problem. You may even want to invite the student to attend.

The foregoing may sound like a lot of work, and it is. The first few batches of papers which you correct will require a lot of time. For instance, it is not untypical to spend an entire day grading the first batch. Some excessively enthusiastic people have taken an entire weekend. But take heart. Grading and commenting gets easier and faster as you get more experience. Eventually, you will be able to grade papers in one rather than three readings, while still following the steps described above.

A very useful method of written evaluation is to put your commentary in a personal letter to the student. People can ignore comments on papers, but how many people can ignore a personal letter? This demonstrates that you care enough to go to a little extra work, provides the student with an example of good writing, and is easier to read than handwriting.

Lastly, you should realize that you are not limited in your commentary to what you can write on a page. There is often time during workshop periods to take a students aside and give a little more feedback and explanation. And of

course, you can always have an office conference.

A SPECIAL NOTE ON MECHANICS

Your students should not be worrying about mechanics during their first draft. During the stage of creative fervor, concern about subject and verb agreement, spelling, and punctuation just gums up the works. After a draft is completed however, if it is going to be turned in for a grade, the student should be aware that mechanics are important. Mechanically correct writing is not necessarily good writing but a good final draft is mechanically correct. Mechanical mistakes communicate a sense of untrustworthiness about the writer. Though it may be unfair, some audiences will discount what the writer has to say unless it is set forth according to the rules of "standard English."

You will find that different students tend to have difficulty with different problems. For this reason, mechanical problems should generally be handled on an individual basis. Most errors can be eliminated through comments on students papers and personal conferences.

Sometimes you will find that the class as a whole tends to make the same errors. A useful exercise is to find sentences in the students' own papers that illustrate these common problems. You can make a handout with copies of these sentences for the whole class, and use a session for students to find the errors and correct the sentences.

One of the quandaries that you will face in grading papers is how many mechanical errors to mark. Indicating every mechanical error, particularly in a paper which has many errors, can sometimes defeat your purpose as a teacher. When students see a paper covered with corrections, they go into "sensory overload," or perhaps depression. The paper goes to the bottom of the backpack never to be seen again. Depending on the student, you may only want to correct a few mechanical errors at a time.

You will probably have a few students who are especially burdened by a variety of mechanical problems. You should encourage these students to come to your office hours for help. Also, you may want to suggest the purchase of a handbook, and then direct the student to appropriate sections or exercises in the handbook.

One last consideration. Don't let whole class editing discussions turn into mechanical error hunts. Some discussion of mechanical errors may be very benefical and may emphasize to disbelieving students that mechanical errors

really do impede communication. Your main focus, however, should be on broader issues.

REVISION

Writing, someone said, is rewriting. You will probably find that most of your students have not thought of writing in this way. Many of your students will begin your class thinking that a competent writer should be able to sit down at a typewriter and produce a 4.0 final draft at one sitting. Because they cannot do this, they have defined themselves as poor writers. To dispel these misconceptions, you will have to teach revision as part of the writing process. Your first step is to salvage your students' self-esteem. The need to revise does not indicate that they are bad writers (or good writers, either). Revised papers are not necessarily good papers, but all good papers are revised, and generally, the best writers are the ones who spend the most effort revising. The second step is to define what you mean by revision. Revision is not simply copyreading and correcting mechanical errors. A revision is a re-vision: another look at the work again from a fresh perspective, a reevaluation of the work as a whole.

In doing a revision, the student will be concerned with many issues. Your comments on each student paper will be a partial guide to revision, but a genuine revision goes beyond mere readjustment of the paper to conform with teacher comments. The main point is to make the student see the revision not as a minor addendum to an old writing experience, but as a new writing experience in which discovery still plays apart. The following are some typical issues which a student might need to consider in revising:

1) What can I do to further emphasize and develop my main idea or theme?

2) Did I fail to include information or explanation which the reader needs to understand the paper? In other words, am I assuming the reader has information which he does not have? Am I failing to draw specific connections and relationships between my ideas?

3) Am I explaining too much to my reader, underestimating the intelligence and expertese of my audience.

The main point is to address the major issues of communication first: the paper's organization and content. Once this task is performed, the student can go on to sentence editing and proofreading.

ATTENDANCE

One of your students, "John Doe," misses class for days at a time. Then, with the term half over, he completely disappears. You have several other students who come to class on a hit or miss basis; so on days when the class does peer editing, you are frequently stuck with one or two people per editing group. This results in a continual, last minute shuffling of the membership of editing groups, so that you can make the groups of reasonable size. This is aggravating to you and the students who regularly attend. Finally, during the last week of classes, John Doe shows up with all of his assignments completed, and expects you to grade them. You do not know enough about John's ability to even know for sure whether the papers are his own work.

Particularly in classes which use the peer editing approach to writing, absences can be quite disruptive. Sometimes there are even John Does who never come to class, and then mysteriously appear at the end of the term to present you with a stack of papers. In effect, John has not taken the course--but he still expects a grade. As preventive medicine, most writing teachers at Michigan State use some type of attendance policy in their classes. There are probably as many absence policies as there are TAs. Most TAs take the approach of dropping a student's grade a particular increment (such as .1 or .25 or .5) for each class missed, or for each class missed after a certain number of "free" absences. Though the policies differ in detail, the aims of such policies are generally the same. You want to encourage attendence without being so punitive that at the end of the term you are unwilling to enforce your own policy. You will want to deliberate, for instance, before adopting a policy in which your best students lose half a grade or more for missing three or four classes. On the other hand, you may want to give yourself leeway to give a low grade to even a very good writer who has missed a substantial number of classes. Whatever absence policy you adopt, you must state that policy clearly **in your syllabus** and if your policy bears on your students' grades, you must keep careful attendance records. Why? If a student disputes a grade which you lowered due to poor attendance, you will need to establish that (1) the student had notice of your absence-policy and (2) you have an accurate record of his absences.

CONFERENCES

During the term, you should have at least one personal conference with each of your students. A conference gives you a chance to talk one to one with your students, to focus on individual problems, and to establish a more personal student-teacher relationship. Some TAs have two or more conferences per term, and some have even structured entire courses around conferences.

Conferences can be used for a variety of purposes. At the beginning of the term, some TAs have simply used them for the purpose of getting acquainted with their students. At the end of the term, they can be used to give the students a final, oral evaluation of their work and to obtain students' informal evaluation of the course. The main purpose of conferences, however, is to discuss students' writing. The conference gives you an ideal situation in which to discuss a particular paper thoroughly, to point out recurring problems in the student's writing, to praise what is good in the writing, and to provide encouragement. The conference also gives you a chance to find out how the student goes about writing a paper. It is as important to discuss process as product. A conference also gives you a great opportunity to get some feedback on your course; e.g., How are the peer-editing groups working for you? Are the pre-writing exercises helping you? Should I spend some class time talking about grammar mistakes? How is the course working out for you in general?

The key to having a productive conference is <u>focus</u>. You need to address specific issues. Having a mental list of what needs to be discussed helps to keep the conference from turning into an aimless chat. You do not want to be over-organized, however. The student will have his own concerns, which you should address. You need to strike a compromise between responsiveness and directiveness. Given your other time commitments, you will probably want to limit your conferences to fifteen or twenty minutes. In some cases, you can accomplish more in one fifteen minute conference than you would in several weeks of class time.

A note on logistics: If, which is likely, you are in an office with several other TAs, the noise level may interfere with conferencing. Also, you may want to meet in a more relaxed atmosphere. There is no law that says you must hold conferences in your office. Some TAs prefer to do it in the Union Cafeteria, at the International Center (Crossroads Cafe), or at one of the eateries on Grand River.

CLASS SESSIONS: RUNNING A CLASS ON A DAY TO DAY BASIS

It is the first week in November. Your students have gotten to know each other. They have completed several assignments and are beginning to work on revisons. You walk into the classroom a minute or two before class is to start and become enmeshed in the following scene:

The members of an editing group, who have grown very friendly over the last five weeks, are having a loud discussion about their various weekend activities; four students are waiting by your desk to ask questions: one wants to know if he can hand in an assignment late, one is unhappy about a grade, one has questions about the coming assignment, and one wants to tell you she needs to miss class next Tuesday so she can keep a dental appointment. Meanwhile, some members of the class are looking at you expectantly, others are reading the State News, and others are conversing with each other. Everyone seems to have their own agenda, few of which correspond to yours. It is up to you to bring order out of chaos. How do you do it?

First of all, you need to give <u>your</u> agenda priority. You ask the four students to take their seats. After they sit down, in a normal tone of voice, you ask if there are any questions about the coming assignment. If the editing group keeps talking, ask specific individuals in the group to please pay attention, class is starting. (Individual appeals have more authority than general ones.) Very efficiently, you have done a lot to gain control.

As you get into questions on the assignment, the student who was waiting to ask you an individual question now has his issue addressed publicly. Since, it turns out, several other people in class have the same question, you save yourself multiple explanations. After dealing with these questions, you make the general announcement: "If anyone has questions about personal concerns or about something other than what we are doing in class today, please see me at the end of class."

Now you can get to the main business of the day, which turns out to be peer editing. You have already established the membership of the groups. Before breaking into groups, however, you give a "mini-lesson" on how to write conclusions. You talk about emphasizing the main point of the paper and giving the reader a sense of closure. You want everyone to get feedback on these two issues, so you ask the editing group members to comment specifically on the conclusions of each paper they read. You then break into editing groups.

Your class is set up to have six groups with four members each. Four groups usually have a full membership. Today, as usual, the other two groups have

missing members. One group has two students and one group has three. You want each student to get several responses to his or her work, so you decide to combine the two groups for this particular editing session. Five minutes later, in walks John Doe. John frequently comes late. He is a member of one of the editing groups you combined. What do you do with him? First, you tell him that you need him to be on time. By coming late, he misses part of the benefit of peer editing. Also, it disrupts the other editing groups to insert him as a member during the middle of a session. (You should have similar conversations with the other absentees; you need to stabilize the membership of your two problem groups.) Then, you try to gracefully insert him into a group.

After you finish with group editing, you have a final class discussion about conclusions. What did your students like about the conclusions they read? What did they not like? What kinds of changes were recommended? As the hour ends, you deal with the problems of the three other people who were waiting for you at the beginning. You've done a good job, and you can leave the room with a sense of satisfaction.

The proceeding scenario is typical, but each day brings different challenges. To list each specific problem you might encounter would make teaching seem more complicated and difficult than it really is. There are three simple principles for managing a class effectively. First, you need to have an agenda. It is a good idea to jot down a short outline of what you want to accomplish for the day. Second, you have to give your own agenda priority and carry it out, not because you like to assert your authority, but because following a plan is the best and most efficient way of teaching the class. Third, you need to establish regular procedures for regular tasks: students should have their papers collated and stapled before they come to class; students should be on time and their attendence should be regular; when you begin the class, your students should stop talking to each other and pay attention to you.

Your students want you to manage the class effectively: its for their benefit. And once you establish your seriousness about the ground rules, you will be pleasantly surprised about your effectiveness.

GRADING: THE PORTFOLIO IDEA

Many teachers have noted that grading often seems to get in the way of learning. Rather than becoming engaged with the writing process, students begin to play a numbers game. Students who are doing poorly at mid-term lose heart,

and as their motivation suffers, so does their writing. Also, when students see a grade on their paper, they tend to ignore your comments, as if the grade were all that mattered. What can you do to avoid these side-effects of grading?

One solution is the portfolio. It is not a complete solution, but many teachers find it to be the most congenial way of avoiding the problems caused by grade consciousness. The portfolio idea is simple. The teacher simply defers grading student papers. You still make comments on the writing, of course. You want your students to have the most helpful feedback you can give. Your objective is to create an atmosphere in which your students worry less about grades, more about writing, and hence, do better in the course. If students do become concerned about their grades, you can use a mid-term conference to give them a fairly specific idea of how they are doing. At the end of the term, all of the papers (some teachers want all drafts) are turned in to the teacher in a "portfolio," which is then graded as a whole. Another advantage of the portfolio, for beginning teachers, is that it helps them to deal with grade inflation. Grading the writing as a whole gives you a better chance to realistically access a student's progress and competency.

The use of portfolios can create problems, however. In an attempt to be encouraging and enthusiastic, it is not difficult to mislead students, who perhaps, would be all too happy to ignore the quality of their writing. Since you are not providing a running grade tabulation, a student can sometimes make the case that he or she has been unfairly surprised by the final grade. Keeping this problem in mind, however, does a good bit to mitigate it. If one can walk a sober line between realism and enthusiasm, the portfolio idea can be the best solution to grading.

GRADING: MICHIGAN STATE'S SYSTEM

Michigan State University operates on a numerical grading system. It is possible to give the following grades: 4.0 (the equivalent of an A), 3.5 (A-, B+), 3.0 (B), 2.5 (B-, C+), 2.0 (C), 1.5 (C-, D+) 1.0 (D) and 0.0 (Failing). It is also possible for students to take a course on the "credit/no credit" system. Credit is granted to undergraduate students who do 2.0 work or better--no numerical grade is given. As a teacher you will not necessarily know whether a student is taking your course credit/no credit, since, at the end of the term, you will simply turn in a numerical grade for each student and the registrar will do the conversion. (It is very rare for an undergraduate to take a course credit/no credit.)

I-INCOMPLETE

In addition to the above grades, teachers can also give an "I-Incomplete." An Incomplete is not a grade, but rather, the postponement of a grade. It is given when for some catastrophic reason, the student is unable to complete the course work before the term ends. According to the university catalog: "The I-Incomplete May Be Given Only When: The student (a) has completed at least eight weeks of the term, but is unable to complete the class work and/or take the final examination because of illness or other compelling reason; and (b) has done satisfactory work in the course; and (c) in the instructor's judgment can complete the required work without repeating the course."

Be aware of two major caveats before giving an Incomplete: **(1) DO NOT** give an Incomplete without the permission of the course coordinator. **(2) DO NOT** make the mistake of giving the student a longer period of time to complete the course than is allowed by university regulations: you don't want an Incomplete to turn into a failure because you have given a student incorrect information about deadlines.

In order to give an I-incomplete you must first get the course coordinator's approval. Then you must complete a "Report of Incomplete" which spells out why the Incomplete is being given, what the student must do to make up the Incomplete, and how long the student has to finish the course work. "THE REQUIRED WORK MUST BE COMPLETED AND A GRADE MUST BE REPORTED TO THE OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR NO LATER THAN THE MIDDLE OF THE STUDENT'S NEXT TERM IN ATTENDANCE."

GRADES:DISPUTES AND CHANGES

Occasionally students disagree with you about the grades that you give them. Most frequently, these disagreements involve specific assignments, but sometimes the dispute involves a final grade. The best approach to this problem is prevention. If the dispute involves a particular assignment, you can always get a second opinion about your evaluation from one of your fellow TAs or from the course coordinator. You will find, in the overwhelming majority of cases, that their opinion is the same as yours. Such corroboration is valuable. A second opinion is helpful as a confidence builder, both for you and the student. Also, obtaining a second opinion is a demonstration that you care enough about the student to take some extra effort. The best way to avoid major disputes is to

address student concerns about grading promptly and courteously.

Very rarely a TA becomes involved in a full blown dispute about a final grade. Such disputes never happen at psychologically convenient times:

It is the beginning of another term. You're designing a new class, thinking of trying out some new ideas, and taking some new classes of your own. As you sit in your office, feet on your desk, talking to fellow TAs about the break, savoring a moment of relaxation before the term starts, a familiar face peeks through the door: one of your students from last term. You immediately realize that this student is probably not here to present you with a bouquet of flowers, or to nominate you for the excellence in teaching award. The student has a worried look, and she wants to see her portfolio. She just does not understand why her grade was that low. She thought she was doing fine in the course.

You will probably end up going over her papers with her, discussing in detail how you determined her grade. In the overwhelming majority of cases, her initial grade will be correct, and you should stick to it. Avoid snap decisions. Have some confidence in yourself. DO NOT GIVE THE STUDENT AN IMMEDIATE DECISION THAT YOU WILL CHANGE HER GRADE!! Talk to the course coordinator before you make such a promise. If, after a reasonable period of deliberation and advice, you feel that justice was not done, you can change a student's grade and filling out an administrative action form which you can obtain in the office. Even the best judges sometimes reverse themselves.

If, however, you do not change the grade, and you cannot resolve the problem by talking with the student, the scenario will be different. In that case, the student should next make an appointment with the course coordinator. The course coordinator may meet with you and the student or with the student alone. He or she may also discuss the student with you before the appointment or ask you for relevant materials, your calculation of the student's grade for instance. If discussion with the course coordinator still doesn't resolve the matter, the student may next make a complaint to the Associate Chairperson for Undergraduate Studies. If you decide not to change the grade, the student still has the opportunity, (until midterm of the quarter following the alleged problem) to contest your decision. The student must use the following procedure, which is identical for both TAs and faculty members:

To begin, the student makes a complaint to the Associate Chairperson for Undergraduate Studies. Whoever is occupying that chair will try to obtain a full statement of the student's complaint. Having done this, the Associate Chairperson will then inform the TA of the problem and listen to the TA's

statement of how the grade was determined. At this point, the Associate Chairperson will attempt to resolve the problem. In the overwhelming majority of cases, the Associate Chairperson will advise the student that he or she has no grounds for complaint, and, in the overwhelming majority of cases, the student will drop the complaint. Should the student disagree with the Chairperson's decision, however, he or she can take further action by filing a written complaint with the English Department. (This is very rare indeed.)

The written complaint is forwarded to the Department's Committee on Teaching. The TA also responds in writing, and the Committee makes a decision. Within 10 days, the Committee forwards its decision to the student and TA. Should the decision be against the student, a further appeal can be taken to the Dean of the College of Arts and Letters.

THE CODE OF TEACHING RESPONSIBILITY

The Code of Teaching Responsibility is, as its name suggests, a statement of the minimum responsibilites of instructors and teaching assistants at Michigan State University.

The Code of Teaching Responsibility can be found in the university catalog and in the course schedule books which are published for each term. How important is it to follow the Code? To quote from the first paragraph: ". . . the University conceives them [the provisions] to be so important that performance by instructors in meeting the provisions of this code shall be taken into consideration in determining salary increases, tenure and promotion." Compliance with the Code may also determine whether a teaching assistantship is awarded or continued. (The message: Read the Code for yourself.) Among the most important requirements of the Code are the following:

1) You must tell your students the "instructional objectives" of your course at the beginning of the term. Your "instructional objectives," are a statement of your course goals: what you intend to teach and how you intend to teach it.

2) You must tell your students the method you will use to determine their final course grades. In other words, you need to spell out your grading policy: indicate which assignments will be used to determine grades, the weight to be given to each assignment, the effect of absences and class participation on the grade, and any other criteria used to determine grades.

3) You must tell your students "of any special requirements of attendance which differ from the attendance policy of the university." It is difficult to determine just what, if any, attendance policy the university has. Message: spell out your attendance policy.

4) You must "promptly" return assignments submitted to you for grading. If you are allowing time for revisions, you should return papers in plenty of time for the students to do a revision. As a rule of thumb, try not to keep papers longer than a week, and always try to return papers before the next set is collected. You want students to have the benefit of your comments so that they are able to improve on the next assignment.

5) You must retain final examination and/or porfolios for at least one whole term after the term in which they are submitted. Spring term portfolios or exams must be retained until the end of the following fall term.

6) The papers that your students write are their property. That means that you cannot use them for instructional purposes in other classes unless you have the students' permission. It is good policy to get specific permission in writing.

7) You must meet your class "regularly." Meeting "regularly" means meeting every day on which the class is scheduled, with the following exceptions: You may cancel two or three classes--or even a whole week of classes--while you are conferencing. If you are giving a presentation at a professional meeting, you may cancel one class. If you need to miss more than one class for professional meetings, you should have someone take the class for you. In either case the course coordinator should know about your absences before they happen. **THE MAIN POINT TO REMEMBER: NEVER MISS A CLASS THAT YOU HAVE NOT PREVIOUSLY CANCELLED. IF AN EMERGENCY ARISES AND YOU CANNOT ATTEND A CLASS, CALL THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OFFICE AND ASK THAT SOMEONE GO TO YOUR CLASS AND CANCEL IT.**

8) You must schedule and keep office hours. The Code requires no set number, however, you should schedule at least 2 hours per week.

Students have the opportunity to file complaints against teachers who violate the Code. Such complaints generally involve the grading issue. The Code

also sets forth guidelines and hearing procedures for students who desire to file such complaints. A summary of these procedures is contained in the section **GRADING DISPUTES AND CHANGES**.

STUDENT INSTRUCTIONAL RATING SYSTEM (SIRS)

At the end of the term, you not only get to grade your students. They get to grade you! During the last week of classes, or earlier, you will distribute Student Instructional Rating System Forms to your class, and a sufficient number of #2 pencils for them to complete the forms. (You pick up these materials in the main office.) The form consists of a series of questions about your teaching on one side, and on the other, a space where the students may make general comments.

The object of SIRS is rather starkly set forth in the university catalog as follows: To gather information which is "put to two principal uses: (1) providing instructors and teaching units with an accurate account of the student response to their instructional practices, to the end that classroom effectiveness be maintained at the highest level of excellence; and (2) providing teaching units with one kind of information to be considered in deciding on retention, promotion, salary, and tenure. . . ." Don't let this language induce too much fear and trepidation. By the end of the term, you will be anxious to find out what your students thought of you and the class. It is feedback that you need, and in general, English Dept. TAs receive high evaluations from their students. Look at SIRS forms as part of your education as a teacher. SIRS forms are given heavy consideration in determining which TAs will be nominated by the Department for the university's Excellence in Teaching Award.

When you receive your SIRS forms from your students, you will have the opportunity to read them. You will then turn them in to your course coordinator who will consider them in evaluating your performance as a TA. After this, the forms are taken to the Administration Building for scoring. You will receive a computerized statistical summary how your students answered the forms and the forms will be put in your file.

In addition to distributing SIRS forms, if you have particular concerns, you may want to devise your own questionaire and give it to your students. This can be particularly helpful if you want feedback on particular teaching materials, techniques, readings or assignments. Many TAs do this and you might want to ask around for pointers.

A SHORT BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BOOKS ON TEACHING WRITING

The literature on the teaching of writing is vast. Rather than even attempt to give a representative sampling of books on composition theory, we simply call your attention to four books that are classics in the field:

Emig, Janet. The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders. National Council of Teachers of English Research Report No. 13. Urbana Ill.: 1971.

A pedantic but rich study of how twelfth graders actually write. The processes and problems described in this book are much the same as the ones you will be confronting in English 213.

Elbow, Peter. Writing Without Teachers. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.

Elbow has many interesting ideas on pre-writing techniques and exercises; he gives some practical advice for the operation of student editing groups.

Macrorie, Ken. Telling Writing. Rochelle Park, N.J.: Hayden Book Co., 1976.

An energetic book specifically aimed at getting students' to write authentic prose instead of what Macrorie calls "Engfish." Macrorie also has good suggestions for pre-writing exercises and for peer editing techniques.

Moffett, James. Teaching the Universe of Discourse. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1968.

The theory behind what Moffet calls a "student-centered" lanuage arts program. Moffett is a clever and sensiable commentator on all aspects of writing pedagogy. See especially his observations about peer editing.